* Government has announced a Scheme for assistance for construction of Group Workshed for powerlooms to create a better working environment and obtain high productivity.

* Import of shuttleless looms has been allowed under concessional customs duty of 5% without countervailing duty. Excise exemption has also been given on such looms.

* Accelerated depreciation benefits at the rate of 50% have been extended on the weaving machinery installed under TUFS.

* Government has taken up modernization and strengthening of Powerloom Service Centres (PSCs), which have been set up to provide technical services of training, testing, project preparation etc.

* Computer Aided Design Centres have been set up to enable small powerloom units to access new designs and upgrade fabric by product development inputs.

Special Modernisation Fund for Textile Industry

*428. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up a Special Modernisation Fund for the entire textile industry to help it face international competition;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the quantum of loans and grants, separately that will be given; and

(d) the details of other facilities Government propose to give to the textile industry to meet foreign competition?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Major initiatives in terms of facilities for textile industry for its modernisation and meeting foreign competition are:—

(i) In this year's budget the following important announcements have been made:—

* Except for mandatory excise duty on polyester filament yarn including texturised yarn, synthetic and artificial fibres and synthetic and artificial filament yarns, the whole value addition chain has been given excise exemption option.

* Additional Excise Duty on Textiles and Textile Articles (AT&T) and Additional Excise Duty (Goods of Special Importance) Act have been abolished.

* Basic Customs Duty on various textile machinery and spare parts has been reduced to 5%.

(ii) Launching of the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector;

(iii) For accelerating modernization of the powerlooms segment of the textile industry, 20% Capital assistance is available on investment in TUFS compatible specified machinery subject to a ceiling of Rs. 12 lakh on amount of assistance;

(iv) Announcement of a package for restructuring of debt portfolios of potentially viable textile units having debt exposure of Rs. 2 crore and above;

(v) De-reservation of the woven segment of readymade garment from the SSI sector. The SSI investment limit for knitted/hosiery segment increased from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 5 crore;

(vi) A Centrally sponsored scheme titled "Apparel Park for Export Scheme" launched for imparting focused thrust for setting up of apparel manufacturing units of international standards at potential growth centres and to give fillip to exports;

(vii) For upgrading infrastructure facilities at important textile centres, a scheme Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme" (TCIDS) has also been launched;

(viii) Cotton Technology Mission launched to improve the productivity and quality of cotton;

(ix) For boosting exports of textile and clothing Government provides financial assistance to Textile Export Promotion Councils under Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme;

(x) Close monitoring of imports on regular basis so as to ensure that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic industry. In case any unfair trade practices come to the notice, action, if necessary, under WTO provisions are taken;

(xi) Facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories have been created to enable exporters to get the garments/textiles pre-tested for conforming to the requirements of importing countries;

(xii) 100% Foreign Direct Investment permitted through automatic route in the textile sector with certain exceptions; and

(xiii) For extending technical assistance and impart training facilities to powerloom weavers and to provide design development Government has set up 44 Powerloom Service Centres (PSCs) and 17 Computer Aided Design Centres.

Steps taken for flood affected people

*429. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that floods have played havoc in Bihar, Assam and other parts of India due to excess rain water flow from higher lands;

(b) if so, the details of the lives, property and crops lost in the flood affected areas;

(c) the steps taken by Government to mitigate the sufferings of flood affected people; and

(d) the action taken to prevent floods in flood prone areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir. Many parts of the country experienced floods during the current South-West Monsoon due to heavy rains and rise in water levels of the rivers.